

# NEW JERSEY BEST PRACTICES 2002-2003 GUIDELINES

The New Jersey State Department of Education has created a recognition program that will identify and catalog New Jersey BEST PRACTICES. The purpose of this program is to recognize and celebrate the excellence achieved by New Jersey's public schools and to make information describing designated BEST PRACTICES readily accessible to educators throughout the state. Information describing New Jersey BEST PRACTICES is available to all schools and the public through the department's web site at <http://www.state.nj.us/education>, Office of Innovative Programs and Practices.

BEST PRACTICES are those innovative strategies that (1) promote high student achievement; (2) address specific educational needs of students and the *Core Curriculum Content Standards including the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards*; (3) yield documented results meeting set objectives, and (4) can be replicated. BEST PRACTICES are designated in 20 categories including subject area disciplines and support areas contributing to high student achievement and a positive school environment. **A list of the categories is found on page 4 of the Guidelines and Application.**

**Eligibility:** Any New Jersey school district or charter school is eligible to participate. The competition is open to public schools serving students in pre-kindergarten to grade 12. The practice must have been in place for a minimum of one year prior to submission. **Only one application per category per school may be submitted. An application cannot be submitted for a BEST PRACTICE that has been previously recognized. Commercially developed practices will not be considered.** There is no limit to the number of schools with practices that a district may propose for consideration.

**Selection Process:** There are five phases to the selection process for BEST PRACTICES which culminates in a Recognition Ceremony in June.

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| (1) | December   | The county superintendents of schools assure that all applicants do not evidence any violations of code, statute or department policy.  |
| (2) | February   | Panels of New Jersey educators identified by their chief school administrators and, in some instances, experts from other professions are convened to read and evaluate all eligible applications to determine the semifinalists. |
| (3) | March      | Panelists meet in a second round to read and evaluate the semifinalist applications to determine the finalists.   |
| (4) | Late March | Finalist applications are verified for compliance by the county superintendents of schools.   |
| (5) | April      | Finalists receive site visits to supplement and confirm the information written in the applications. Fifty BEST PRACTICES are named and the schools notified.   |

<b><u>If you fail to comply with the technical requirements, your application will be eliminated.</u></b>		
<b>Criteria for Evaluation of Applications</b>		<b>Maximum Points</b>
1.	The practice has identified objectives, is innovative, promotes high student achievement, and can be replicated.	40 points
2.	The practice addresses the <i>Core Curriculum Content Standards including the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards</i> .	25 points
3.	The practice has documented assessment measures for meeting its objectives and student educational needs.	35 points

**Recognition:** Banners, pins and certificates will be presented at a statewide ceremony with additional recognition generated through the media.

<b>FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION</b>	
<b>Central and Southern Regions:</b> Jennifer Beaumont, Southern Regional Office New Jersey Department of Education 1492 Tanyard Drive, Sewell, NJ, 08080 Telephone (856) 468-5530 or Fax (856) 468-8426	<b>Northern Region:</b> Grelyn Diggs, Northern Regional Office New Jersey Department of Education 501 River Street, Paterson, NJ 07524 Telephone (973) 569-2125 or Fax (973) 754-0658

**NEW JERSEY  
BEST PRACTICES  
2002-2003 APPLICATION**

**Failure to comply with the procedures for submission of the application will result in the elimination of the application.**

**Application Requirements:**

- RESPONSES** to the information and the statements below must be **ANONYMOUS** and **ACCURATE**. No reference should be made to the names of the district, the school(s) or community. Use the words "the school" or "the schools" in responding to the statements
- USE ONLY THE SPACE PROVIDED ON THE APPLICATION FORM** on pages 1, 2 (if applicable), and 4. Do not include any additional materials, as they will not be reviewed in the selection process.
- Applications must be typed on 8 ½" x 11" white paper, portrait format. Twelve-point or larger computer font or fourteen-pitch or larger typewritten font must be used. This sentence is in twelve-point Times New Roman.
- Keyboarded responses to all the statements below must be no more than a total of four pages. Keyboard and number the statement followed by the response. Format your response for clarity.
- The information on page 4 and the responses** to statements must be copied on one side of the page. The information on pages 1 and 2 (if applicable) must be copied on one side of the page. Staple pages 1, 2 (if applicable), 4, and the keyboarded responses together, in that same order.
- The original application must be signed by the district chief school administrator or charter school lead person, indicating his/her approval.
- The original and seven copies of the application** must be submitted to the county superintendent of schools by **December 15, 2002**, with the **Itemized List of District Applications** form. Keep the seven copies of each application together with the original containing the signature of the district chief school administrator or charter school lead person on the top of each set.

The following data is required to assist the panelists in the evaluation of the application:		
Type of School	Grade Levels	Practice Name <u>Civics &amp; Government Institute</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Elementary School	_____	Number of Schools with Practice <u>one</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Middle School	_____	Number of Districts with Practice <u>one</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Junior High School	_____	Location <input type="checkbox"/> Urban/City <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Suburban With Urban Characteristics
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High School	<u>9-12</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Suburban <input type="checkbox"/> Small City/Town <input type="checkbox"/> Rural
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	_____	

Check the <b>ONE CATEGORY</b> into which the practice best fits.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Arts (Visual and Performing Arts)	<input type="checkbox"/> Gifted and Talented Programs	<input type="checkbox"/> Safe Learning Environment
<input type="checkbox"/> Assessment/Evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/> Guidance and Counseling Programs	<input type="checkbox"/> School-to-Careers/Workplace Readiness
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Citizenship/Character Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Health and Physical Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Science
<input type="checkbox"/> Diversity and Equity Programs	<input type="checkbox"/> Language Arts Literacy	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Studies
<input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Education Programs	<input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational Support Programs	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional Development	<input type="checkbox"/> World Languages/Bilingual Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Engagement (family involvement and partnerships with business, community, school districts, and/or higher education)	

- Describe the practice proposed for recognition, and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative and how it promotes high student achievement.
- List the specific *Core Curriculum Content Standards*, including the *Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards*,\* addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses those standard(s). Provide an example to substantiate your response.
- Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses. Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met. Provide assessments and data to show how the practice met these needs.
- Describe how you would replicate the practice in another school and/or district.

\*The 2002 edition of the *Core Curriculum Content Standards* published by the New Jersey State Department of Education was disseminated to all districts and charter schools and is available on line through the department's web site at <http://www.state.nj.us/education>.

Through their interdisciplinary studies, students relate literature and historical events. In the 10<sup>th</sup> grade Government Studies course, political philosophical readings and discussion take place.

**Social Studies Standards 6.3, 6.5, 6.6 and 6.7** are addressed in the Social Studies curriculum including themes of Political History of the U.S., Economic History of the U.S., Colonial Geography and War and Conflict.

**Language Arts Standard 3.1.** All students will speak for a variety of real purposes and audiences

All students must participate in a Public Demonstration of Learning during the academic year. In addition, all students perform in various venues of public speaking, including their own governing Congress.

**Language Arts Standard 3.2.** All students will listen actively in a variety of situations to information from a variety of sources.

All students are exposed to speakers representing all viewpoints and are encouraged to analyze their speech and query the presenters. All students are encouraged to listen attentively to their peers both in committee time and during peer presentations.

**Language Arts Standard 3.3.** All students will write in clear, concise, organized language that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes.

CGI students communicate with their peers on many levels, including The Eye of CGI, which emanates from the Press Corps. Students are responsible for writing letters to parents and outside sources for requesting speakers. Students are engaged in writing clear and concise legislation for their own Congress

**Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standard 1.** All students will develop career planning and workplace readiness skills.

In their sophomore year, students in CGI are exposed to an onsite Career Skills session with a career planning specialist, as well as participation in the Career Shadowing program in the larger school. In addition, seniors must fulfill a 40 hour internship with a public policy placement.

**Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standard 2.** All students will use information, technology and other tools

All CGI students receive one technology credit and must provide evidence of a legislative bill that they have written.

**Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standard 4.** Students will demonstrate self-management skills

Every CGI student is a member of a legislative committee and must demonstrate working cooperatively with others to accomplish a task. Also, there is a committee rubric used to evaluate a student's success at this standard

***3. Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses. Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met. Provide assessments and data to show how the practice met these needs.***

The educational needs of students that the practice addresses, the measures used, and the assessments and data that show how the practice meets those needs are discussed below.

The students' need for mentoring is addressed by each student being assigned a faculty mentor with whom he or she is to meet once each month. In addition, there is peer group mentoring.

The students' need for differentiated instruction is addressed by students being grouped in cohorts, which are inclusive of both Honors and High Honors/AP students. It is the hope of the Institute that such grouping can achieve the objective of "narrowing the achievement gap." It is the feeling of the staff that just being in this type of classroom setting enhances the learning opportunities for all of our students. Through collaborative learning projects, both groups participate equally in the development of the project.

The students' need for interdisciplinary learning is addressed by using the thematic approach to teaching United States History. Students experience the literature of the times dealing with a specific theme. Each cohort group has an English and Social Studies team that uses a variety of alternative assessments for the group's evaluation.

The students' need for alternative assessments of their performance is addressed by the use of portfolios. All students in CGI are expected to keep a portfolio of their work until their senior year, when they present their best work to a panel of administrators, teachers, peers and community members as a part of their exiting procedure for CGI. All four judges use a rubric for the evaluation of the portfolios.

The students' need for authentic work experiences is addressed by the requirement that they participate in a 40 hour internship in an area of public policy. Forms are distributed for the development of internship plans, mid-term evaluation, final evaluation and self-evaluation.

With block scheduling, there is flexibility to enhance student knowledge through the use of enrichment periods, which are used to address the particular needs of the Honors and High Honors/AP students. The use of the seminar approach for the High Honors and AP level students gives support to the various critical thinking activities needed for that level of productivity. The block also allows the program to be flexible in scheduling speakers and presenting programs of interest to all CGI students.

As closure for each of the themes covered, students are involved in a demonstration, before the public, of what they have learned over time. Every student will be involved in at least one Public Demonstration of Learning each year. Participating in a PDL will aid students in developing and improving public speaking skills.

#### ***4. Describe how you would replicate the practice in another school and/or district.***

Replication of the Civics and Government Institute model can take place in any secondary school where there is need to establish a smaller learning environment. The Institute model would be very difficult to work in a non-blocked schedule, where there is a need to have flexibility in both pupil and staff scheduling. In developing such a learning environment, there is a need to start small, with just one grade, and then add a grade over time. There is a need for professional development of staff members in the art of interdisciplinary and collaborative teaching. Interest in creating such a program requires that the staff as well as the Board of Education, and in some case the community, buy into the concept of the small learning community.

***1. Describe the practice proposed for recognition, and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative and how it promotes high student achievement.***

The Civics and Government Institute (CGI), is an innovative program that has been in existence for five years. Presently, the Institute services one hundred and seventy two students in grades 10-12 in an interdisciplinary and differentiated learning environment. Students in the Institute currently take their English and Social Studies classes, based on a thematic approach to United States' History, within the Institute during a three period block. Also included in the block are government studies classes and their own self-governance venue, their CGI Congress. Congress is modeled on the U.S. Congress and meets once per week, the sophomores and juniors make-up the House, while the senior class makes up the Senate. Each student is a member of a committee that meets twice per week and drafts legislation for their Congress sessions. In addition to the Legislative branch, there is an Executive Branch, made-up of an elected President and Vice President and various cabinet positions. There is a Supreme Court that makes-up the Judicial Branch, made-up of three justices, confirmed by both Houses of the CGI Congress.

The objectives of the Civics and Government Institute are as follows: (1) create a learning environment that will help students realize their potential by providing the skills and encouraging the attitudes which will help them achieve their fullest potential academically, socially, and emotionally; (2) educate students so that they may contribute to society as worthy citizens in the home, the school and the community; (3) prepare students to participate in a democratic government and fulfill the responsibilities of citizenship; (4) impart on the students the ability to perceive and adjust to change in our society, the ability to realize the value of diversity, and the need to treat individuals in a humane and equitable manner; and (5) narrow the "learning" and "achievement" gaps that may be evident within the student body.

CGI creates an environment that provides instruction delivered in a variety of ways that fosters success while offering frequent opportunities to stretch, to challenge and to take risks; that supports student effort, initiative and individuality; and encourages self-exploration. The curriculum attempts to be inclusive and representative of the whole of human experiences across ethnic, racial, gender and religious lines and is presented with an emphasis on interconnectedness of disciplines, not a series of separate courses. Through inclusive classroom settings, students are encouraged to "raise the bar" in their educational pursuits. The Institute allows for a multiplicity of learning styles by providing a varied program and diverse methods of instruction and assessment.

***2. List the specific Core Curriculum Content Standards, including the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards \* addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses those standard(s). Provide an example to substantiate your response.***

**Social Studies Standard 6.1.** All students will learn democratic citizenship and how to participate in the constitutional system of government of the United States.

Through their own self-governance and the Government Studies courses, the students are introduced to the legislative process in a democratic society. In the Government Studies courses, students gain knowledge and understanding of the three branches of the U.S. government and the system of checks and balances within the Constitutional framework.

**Social Studies Standard 6.2.** All students will learn democratic citizenship through the humanities, by studying literature, art, history and philosophy, and related fields.